

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 /085 W
-----086321 020905Z /13

O R 020802Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6850

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0393

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA

SUBJ: NAMIBIA - VIEWS OF PFP FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN

1. AT A MEETING MARCH 1 WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR, PFP FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN JAPPIE BASSON DISCUSSED THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS. BASSON SAID THERE WERE A NUMBER OF THINGS ABOUT THE PROPOSAL THAT BOTHERED HIM. THERE WAS A GREATDEAL OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW THE PLAN WOULD WORK IN PRACTICE; MANY THINGS WERE LEFT UP IN THE AIR; INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF DISPUTES BETWEEN THE AG AND THE UN SPECIAL REP. NEVERTHELESS, ON THE WHOLE HE THOUGHT IT WAS BEST TO TAKE THE RISK AND ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL.

2. THE PFP, HE SAID, IS OF COURSE TOTALLY IN THE DARK AS TO THE GOVT'S ACTUAL THINKING ON THE MATTER BUT HIS IMPRESSION IS THAT THEY ARE STILL HANGING FIRE AND HAVE NOT QUITE MADE UP THEIR MIND. BUT,
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HE SAID, HE WOULD BE VERY SURPRISED IF IN THE END, THEY CHOSE MORE OR LESS TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL. THE GOVT'S OBJECTIVES ALL ALONG, HE SAID, HAS BEEN TO PREVENT A SWAPO TAKEOVER OF NAMIBIA WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TRYING TO AVOID INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS AND FURTHER ISOLATION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

3. BASSON SAID THERE SEEMED TO BE TWO BIG PROBLEMS WITH THE WESTERN PROPOSAL IN THE EYES OF THE GOVT AS WELL AS IN THE EYES OF LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS IN NAMIBIA WITH WHOM HE HAD TALKED ON A RECENT VISIT TO WINDHOEK (BASSON WAS FOR 10 YEARS AN MP ELECTED FROM SWA). BASSON SAID THE FIRST PROBLEM WAS THE PROVISION FOR THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL SAG FORCES AFTER CERTIFICATION OF THE ELECTION RESULTS. BLACK AS WELL AS WHITE POLITICAL LEADERS IN NAMIBIA AND NOT JUST PRO-SAG ELEMENTS BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD LEAVE A SERIOUS VACUUM. THE PROBLEM, BASSON SAID, IS THAT THERE WOULD THEN BE NO CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY WHICH COULD CALL FOR SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS TO RETURN IN THE EVENT SWAPO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION AND BEGAN TO MOVE ACROSS THE BORDER IN FORCE. FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO SEND ITS TROOPS BACK IN THIS SITUATION WOULD EXPOSE IT TO THE RISK OF BEING LABELED AN AGGRESSOR. IF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WERE COMPOSED OF A NON-SWAPO MAJORITY, HE SAID, IT WOULD BE DIVIDED BY AN ARRAY OF COMPETING PARTIES AND IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME FOR IT TO PULL ITSELF TOGETHER AND FORM A GOVT MUCH LESS AGREE ON A CONSTITUTION. IN THE INTERVAL, HE ASKED, WHO WOULD CONSTITUTE THE AUTHORITY IN NAMIBIA?

4. THE SECOND PROBLEM, HE SAID, WAS THE QUESTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AG AND THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.
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GIVEN THE POSITION THE SAG HAS TAKEN OVER THE YEARS AGAINST UN INVOLVEMENT, HE DID NOT THINK VORSTER COULD POSSIBLY ACCEPT A SITUATION IN WHICH HE SEEMED TO BE TURNING OVER AUTHORITY TO THE UN. EVEN IF THE AG AND THE UNSR ARE PORTRAYED AS CO-EQUAL, BASSON SAID, IN REALITY THE SPECIAL REP WOULD HAVE AN ENORMOUS STAFF AS WELL AS OPERATING MILITARY UNITS AT HIS DISPOSAL AND MANY PEOPLE THROUGHOUT NAMIBIA FEAR THAT IN THE EVENT OF A DISPUTE WITH THE AG, THE SPECIAL REP WOULD SIMPLY TAKE OVER. THIS APPREHENSION COULD BE REDUCED, BASSON SAID, IF THE CONTACT GROUP SPELLED OUT THE METHOD FOR SOLVING SUCH DISPUTES.

5. THE MORE SWAPO APPEARS UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL, BASSON SUGGESTED, THE MORE THE GOVT MIGHT NATURALLY BE ENTICED TO TAKE THE RISK OF ACCEPTING IT, ALTHOUGH SWAPO, OF COURSE, COULD THEREUPON CHANGE ITS MIND. BUT ANOTHER CONSIDERATION FOR THE GOVT, BASSON SAID, WAS THE UNCERTAINTY OF WHAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD GAIN BY TAKING THIS GAMBLE. IN OTHER WORDS, IN THIS SITUATION, WHAT SORT OF SUPPORT WOULD THE WESTERN COUNTRIES PROVIDE TO A SUBSEQUENT INTERNAL

SETTLEMENT IF SWAPO REJECTED THE WESTERN PROPOSAL?

6. BASSON SAID HE FOUND THE WHITES IN NAMIBIA VERY NERVOUS. THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF DISINVESTMENT AND MONEY WAS FLOWING OUT OF THE TERRITORY. HE SAID THE GOVT HAD CONSIDERED HOW IT MIGHT DISCOURAGE THIS. BASSON SPECULATED THAT EVEN IF A TURNHALLE GOVT CAME ABOUT, IT WOULD MOVE TO REDUCE WHITE PRIVILEGE RAPIDLY AND TO REDISTRIBUTE WEALTH. THIS COULD LEAD TO MORE EMIGRATION BY THE WHITES AND A RESULTANT BREAKDOWN OF SERVICES ALL OF WHICH WOULD HAVE A SNOWBALLING EFFECT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF IT WORKED OUT IN A REASONABLE WAY IT COULD HAVE A "TERRIFIC IMPACT" IN SOUTH AFRICA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAPET00393
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780095-0543
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803116/aaaadull.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e0e73dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3145346
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA - VIEWS OF PFP FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA, (BASSON, JAPPIE)
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e0e73dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014